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BETTER PLANTS

God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden



VOLUME I

FEBRUARY, 1923

NUMBER 1

Better Plants

A dear old lady writes to us about the flowers she loves and grows in her garden, and about her absorbing interest in her work among the boys in camp during the Civil War and again during the Great War. She says that "down deep in the heart of every man is the soul of a little boy."

I hope and believe she is right. What does anything else matter if our souls keep young and we retain the spirit of youth! One of the joys of youth is to share his treasures with the other fellows. What would be the fun, or use, in knowing a good swimming-hole, going fishing or making a snow fort, if there were no other boys to go along and share the fun?

There is a lot of satisfaction in growing peonies and irises, but the biggest part of it comes from showing them to my friends, knowing the other fellows who grow them, and getting together with them to talk it all over and have a "talk-fest" every now and then.

This is the underlying motive for the publishing of "Better Plants" which I hope to make a regular monthly "talk-fest" to my many friends. I want to be of service to those who are interested in "Better Plants" and better gardens. I want to become better acquainted with all flower growers. Perhaps I can help someone and I am sure you can help me, as many of you have already done in the past, by friendly suggestions from time to time. Every day we receive requests for information on many subjects. The information to one individual can as easily be given to thousands through this medium.

Our policy will be to restrict these pages to subjects of horticultural interest, seasonable notes of plants and shrubs that are especially attractive, plant culture, plant origin, plant lore and myth, plant poetry, and even plant humor, if my friends will contribute.

Those cynically inclined will doubtless inquire, "Have you anything to sell?" Yes, we have—just one thing, an idea—the love of flowers and a garden, and that they pay a big dividend in health, happiness, and prolonged youth.

If the love of gardening disappears,

the Wyomissing Nurseries will cease to exist. If the love of gardening can be increased, all nurseries will grow and thrive and we will be among them.

BERTRAND H. FARR.

A LETTER OF CHEER

Mr. B. H. FARR.

Dear Sir: I am only an old-fashioned "gingham apron" American mother. Just entered my 70th year. Helped to feed the boys in blue during the Civil war. Wrote letters of good cheer during the greater war. Since the end of the war I am keeping house for one of my daughters.

Long ago I found out the only way to grow old gracefully is to forget self and reach out a helping hand to others. You know, down in the soul of every man there lives a little boy who delights in being praised for well doing just as much as he did when his mother boasted of him in the sweet long ago.

My four sons are "Up There." I am the only one left in my family except two daughters, but I find the journey on the Sunset Limited towards the Great Terminal Station City of our God, the most enjoyable of the life trip, through letter writing which has made an army of seen and unseen friends. Memories are wealth no one can take from me.

Just as long as a man or boy obeys God, honors mother, remembers the old home, and is loyal to the Stars and Stripes, I care for him as my own, regardless of creed or nationality.

I am a great lover of flowers. Since the sale of the blessed old home, I have no place to plant flowers, but a dear friend and my oldest daughter do it every year for me and send me beautiful blooms. Pictures, flowers, and music portray the splendors of immortality.

On the screen I get glimpses of many places once visited or lived in foreign lands; God's handiwork in the busy world; wonderful industrial inventions, etc. Lately I have sent to a friend who teaches geography in one of our oldest and largest grammar schools, a goodly collection of circulars and folders illustrating certain manufactured products. She uses these in her work with the pupils and finds that the illustrations and text when thus presented are effective and longer remembered than when the same subject is presented in the ordinary fashion.

May God bless you and give you health, happiness and prosperity in my sincere wish.

A "GINGHAM APRON" MOTHER

Nursery Rhymes and Stories

An angel, in its terrestrial flight over a new valley of the earth, was halted by the sight of a multitude of strange and beautiful white flowers.

A rainbow furnished a convenient vantage point, and upon it the angel alighted in order to examine and admire this wondrous sight at leisure.

Other angels in their journeys were attracted by the lone observer, and the admiring audience increased to great numbers until the rainbow was weighted to the straining point.

Just then a solitary human traveler appeared and the angels, in their haste to leave and avoid detection, exerted their launching spring with such great and combined force that the rainbow collapsed, breaking into millions of fragments.

The fragments fell upon the beautiful white flowers and diffused them with violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red.

And that is how the irises were given their colors.

Pruning Shrubs and Evergreens

The average amateur prunes small trees and shrubs with but two general thoughts in his mind—either to rejuvenate the plant or to maintain a desired height and form. Representative types of the latter may be seen in the closely clipped hedges which line our roadsides or in topiary work where privet, yew, and box are sheared to resemble various shapes and forms.

Pruning to rejuvenate the plant may be accomplished almost any time during the year if no thought is given to the flowering production. Intelligent pruning should consist in the main of (a) removing injured, dead, or diseased branches; (b) removing branches which conflict, cross, or rub against other branches, in other words "thinning out" the shrub so that the remaining branches will be enabled to make a splendid development, air currents be allowed to pass unrestricted through the bush, and the sun permitted to filter down into the center of the plant. Occasionally, succulent growths appear either at the base of the shrub or adventitiously along the stems. They should be cut out, with the exception of two or three most desirable ones, or in a short time they will rob the remainder of the bush of nourishment intended for it.

The best general rule to follow in pruning shrubs is to prune only after the plant has flowered. Spring-flowering shrubs, such as forsythias, deutzias, early-blooming spireas, etc., are best pruned immediately after the flowers fall, while mid-summer- or fall-flowering plants do best if pruned in late winter or early spring before the flower-buds have formed.

But this does not mean that all shrubs should be pruned. On the contrary there are some shrubs that require the removal of dead or diseased wood only. The most important of these are the magnolias, flowering cherries, rhododendrons, viburnums, halesia, caragena, berberis, azaleas, lilacs, and dogwoods.

Evergreens, as a rule, are pruned only to induce a restricted and more compact growth. While the retinosporas, junipers, and arborvitae may be pruned with safety at any time during the year (extremely cold weather excepted), it is best to prune them in May or June, just before the plant starts into growth. By pruning at this time, any hardness or rigidity of form which shearing imparts will soon be lost in the fluffiness of new growth. The firs, pines, spruces, and hemlocks are best pruned at this time, but unless you desire to induce compact unnatural development, it is best to leave them alone.

The Wyomissing Nurseries Co., realizing the great need of intelligent work, under efficient direction, has established a department which is prepared to assist and carry out pruning work in the vicinity of Wyomissing. Phone or write us your requirements. E. L. BATHURST, Landscape Dept.

Kill the Bugs and Keep the Plants Healthy

To the average mind the thoughts of the numerous enemies to which plants are susceptible are appalling, and many people look askance upon the problem of eradicating these deterrents, feeling either that the entire subject of insect and disease control is beyond their scope or that the return from fighting plant enemies does not compensate for the outlay of time and trouble expended.

Perhaps a clear presentation of the methods used in ridding the garden of insects and other pests will serve to clarify the situation. In reality, the general principles attendant upon eradication are simple and when once learned are not easily forgotten.

There are several ways of overcoming plant derangements, the best known of which are spraying and dusting. Whether a power machine or merely a small hand machine should be used is determined largely by the size and quantity of plants to be treated. However, for general purposes a hand sprayer is both economical and efficient.

There are two periods in the year when spraying or dusting material can be used to best advantage—first, the dormant period, which extends from the time plants are dormant in the fall until spring calls forth the annual leafage of all deciduous plants. I might say, however, that spraying during freezing weather is useless and that late fall spraying will necessitate a second treatment in early spring to be of best advantage. So for general purposes about the average garden, an early spring spraying will serve best, and its effects will reach over even into the period when plants are in leaf.

The other season for spraying comes, broadly speaking, in summer, or when plants are in leaf. This article deals mainly with dormant sprays. The problems of summer sprays will be discussed in a later and more timely issue.

There are several precautions to be followed before starting the grim warfare on garden enemies: Make sure that your spray mixtures are the correct ones, will not injure the plants to be sprayed, and will adhere to the foliage. Do the job in a thorough manner. One good application, like a good spanking, is far better than several minor ones. A cloudy day, when but little wind is stirring, is ideal. The humidity of the air will serve to make the mixture adhere to the plant and it will be able to penetrate well into the bark and stock permanently.

Collect and destroy the greatest sources of infection—last year's leaves. Burn them carefully and bury the ashes. Then, with a torch of kerosene-soaked rags, burn all egg-masses and cocoons that may be hanging from trees and tall shrubs, or apply creosote or strong paint to them and these embryo enemies will come out second best in the greatest battle of the ages—the Survival of the Fittest. Prune away all infected branches of shrubs and trees. Burn these, too.

Dormant sprays are designed along the "ounce of prevention" line, and their main function is to create a condition on plants decidedly "unhealthy" to the warring parasites.



Irises are as valuable as masterpieces of art—and can be enjoyed by all

There are many excellent spraying mixtures on the market, and the advice given by their manufacturers may usually be relied upon. Bordeaux mixture, composed of 5 parts of quick-lime, 5 parts of copper sulphate, to 50 gallons of water is excellent, but it must be remembered that this solution is a preventive only. Lime-sulphur solution in concentrate form, one part to 50 parts of water, will do wonders if used appropriately. The general consensus of opinion is that lime-sulphur is one of the best preventives and remedies for scale and fungous diseases known.

Niagara Soluble Sulphur compound is unhesitatingly recommended for destroying oyster shell and San José scale. This is a powdered material of soda ash and sulphur and readily dissolves in hot or cold water immediately before using. All handling prior to using is convenient and economical. The Farr Nurseries Company after thorough tests and investigation, has practically standardized on Niagara products for nursery application.

The dusting process used by us for destroying various insects and fungous growth is considered a marked improvement and economy. The results are as good as formerly obtained from the best spraying materials and the time is cut to a fraction. One man with a hand blower gun can do the work of a team of horses, power sprayer, and two men in less than half the time. Dusting is rapidly supplanting spraying. Consult your County Farm Agent and write us for further details. E. L. BATHURST,

Landscape Department.

Garden Masterpieces

Covered with a concealing coat of paint, "The Marriage of Isaac," presumably by the famous Venetian artist, Paul Veronese, was recently discovered in Philadelphia.

There is authority for believing that the canvas was looted from Italy at the time of Napoleon's invasion, 1796 to 1800. At that time many works of art were carried away by the invaders and still remain hidden to the world at large.

Every fall many masterpieces, products from the hands of devoted and skilled hybridizers, are obscured until spring. The joy and thrill of discovering them each year is no less to a garden lover than would be the joy of discovering a masterpiece under a coat of paint, to a collector.

There is the same joy of possession in owning a prize-winning, choice iris or peony as in owning a masterpiece of sculpture or painting or literature.

There is an added satisfaction in the fact that garden masterpieces multiply in number and can be disseminated to spread beauty throughout the world.

There is a thrill in handling such varieties in the nursery trade. The prominence of Farr garden masterpieces in the iris field is unquestioned. It is only logical that a collection of Farr seedlings can rank with a collection of the works of a Shakespeare, a Raphael, a Rembrandt.

The Coming Invasion

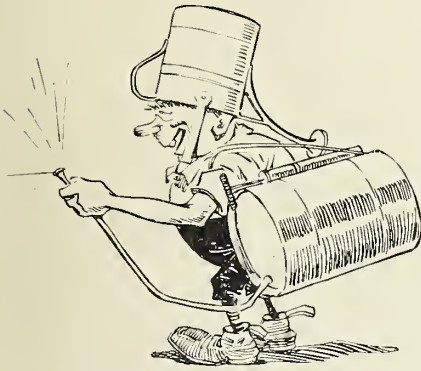
Dreaming under the ground and snow are countless myriads and hordes of life atoms. Already they are restlessly waiting for the encouragement of warmth and thaw to speed their annual campaign.

A few more weeks and some of these atoms, which retain or accumulate food during the winter, will venture into bloom. First the "skunk cabbage" (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)—despised relative of the calla lily—and even under the snow itself, the delicate but brave and furry wrapped hepatica, the domesticated crocus, tulip, narcissus, and hyacinth will burst their shells and come forth as the butterfly comes from the chrysalis.

Presently the perennials, shrubs, and trees will timidly extend their green visiting-cards; the evergreens will put on a new glow; forsythias will blaze over obstacles and across the open spaces.

This peaceable and happy invasion will, however, be accompanied by greater numbers of hostile weeds, insects, and parasites. The fight is on and the garden lover will have another opportunity to "reap as is sown."

The editor has his ear to the ground. Tell us what you like—or dislike—in this number



HEZA WIZWON

Says you ought to read Nos. 13 and 14, then study Bathurst on Bugs if you want better plants

February

GARDEN PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

"For everything you must have a plan. What is not profoundly considered in its detail produces no good result. I trust nothing to chance."—NAPOLEON.

1. Repair hotbeds and coldframes.
2. Repot or give a top dressing to palms or other indoor decorative plants.
3. Verify the condition of summer-blooming bulbs which are in storage. Gladioli, dahlias, etc., are likely to decay or sprout this month if too damp or warm. On the other hand, if they appear dry or shriveled, store them in sand or a damp place.
4. Sharpen and oil garden tools and implements. Take an inventory and replenish where necessary.
5. Overhaul or replenish plant-markers and labels.
6. Order seeds from a reputable seed-house that advertises in a responsible and reputable magazine.
7. Prune certain shrubs and trees. Do not overlook the article on pruning in this month's issue of "Better Plants."
8. Examine your trees carefully. It takes a lifetime to grow good trees, and a little tree surgery at the right time will save them.
9. Have you ever considered how garden furniture adds beauty, utility, and dignity to the garden? In formal gardening pottery is very necessary to complete the scheme. Make your selection and order now.
10. Why not buy or prepare a few houses for the birds? They will help keep your plants clean of insects. A bird-bath will give pleasure to you and to them.
11. Potted bulbs should now be in sun and warmth so as to have Easter bloom.
12. Do you know you can force sprays of early-flowering shrubs into bloom by cutting them and immersing them in water in the house? Try it on forsythia, pussy willow and *Cydonia japonica*.
13. All dormant trees and shrubs that are subject to the attacks of San José and oyster shell scale should be sprayed this month, unless freezing weather has not yet let up in your locality. Infested trees should be given at least two applications. Read the article on spraying in this issue of "Better Plants."

14. Place your orders for nursery stock this month and put yourself in line for shipment of all the items you have ordered at the time you specify. Next month other orders will be crowding yours. Items may be sold out before your order number is reached, and perhaps the nursery cannot possibly ship your order on time without being unfair to other customers who have ordered early.

This is the dull month for nursery stenographers. Send in your inquiries now and receive maximum consideration and service. The Farr Nurseries Company particularly invites your inquiries along any line.

A New Book

Several publishers have asked me to write a book of the iris, but the pressure of other duties has always seemed to interfere. No one has asked me to write a book of the peony, but for a number of years it has been my ambition to do so.

I have hesitated to undertake this work, feeling that the long-expected manual of the American Peony Society would be published and that it should be given precedence. As time passes, the publication of the Society's manual seems as far distant as ever, and I have resolved to carry out my own ambition and publish my own book of the iris and the peony. These two books shall be incorporated in and become a part of the eighth edition of "Hardy Plant Specialties," in which I shall endeavor to give the results which my experience of twenty-five years in the growing of these plants has taught me.

I had hoped to complete this work last fall, but the task is a long one, and I wish to make it as complete as possible; a book both for the amateur and the professional. A number of colored illustrations which I wish to use can be gotten only from the flowers in bloom, and for this reason I must wait until another June gives me the opportunity to get this work done from the actual blooms.

I make this announcement here for the reason that many requests are already coming in for this book, in anticipation of its early appearance, and it will at least be late midsummer before it can be completely ready for distribution.

BERTRAND H. FARR

Reaching for the Rainbow

"There may not be a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but if a man believes with all his soul that there is and spends his life in the effort to vindicate his belief, his efforts will surely bring him somewhere at last; perhaps to a brighter goal than even the rainbow's end."

We do not claim that our plants are always the best obtainable, although we do strive to have them so. We guarantee quality and safe arrival of any plants we ship, and if anything is unsatisfactory, we are only too glad to have our customers tell us. We find little profit in first orders, and repeat orders are secured only from satisfied customers. Such customers are the backbone of any business that exists for any length of time.

Recent Farr Masterpieces

Iris introduced by Farr since 1908 have appeared in the catalogues of all well-known iris growers—even the English originators have purchased them extensively.

The check list of the American Iris Society has dispelled any passing doubt concerning the merits of Farr seedlings. Farr seedlings have never been "fads of the moment."

CECIL MINTURN. Standards and falls uniform shade of cattleya rose; light beard; large flower; dome shaped. Height 2 feet. A marked improvement in the pink varieties.

SEA GULL. Standards white, dome shaped; falls white, faintly shaded blue, covered with a network of narrow blue lines or veins. Large and distinct flower appropriately named. Height 2 feet.

SEMINOLE. A dome-shaped and very distinct iris of the Archeveque class, which makes it one of the richest colored sorts. Medium height; free blooming; very effective for mass planting. Standards soft violet-rose; falls rich velvety crimson; brilliant orange beard. Honorable mention by the American Iris Society, June, 1920.

JAPANESE. An unusual and entirely different German iris. Standards lavender-white, flecked lilac; falls deep violet-lilac edged pale lavender; coppery yellow beard; standards frequently marked like falls. The six petals spreading horizontally in the form of a Japanese iris give the flower the effect of having six falls without standards.

IRIS—CECIL MINTURN

Iris Cecil Minturn created a great deal of enthusiastic comment this season. Planted next to a large clump of garnet Sweet William, the contrast was most pleasing and was a picture to behold when the shadows of the evening flanked the lawn and cast the witching spell over the garden, for it was then at its best and was a most alluring sight.

For those unacquainted with this lovely variety, its color—a beautiful wistaria overlaid with a pinkish sheen—will be a revelation. Its graceful habit, being medium tall with stout, stiff stems and upright foliage, straight and unbending like a stack of bayonets, is further enhanced by the prolificacy of early blooms, which multiplying very rapidly, are of medium size, strong texture and look you frankly in the face.

L. W. B. in "Wayside Ramblings," *Flower Grower*, December, 1922.

Garden Mileage

It is possible to obtain beauty in the garden with little thought to care and culture. It is also possible to obtain fair service from a motor car by limiting attention to gas and oil requirements, but few car-owners would operate a car in such fashion.

Operating a garden successfully and economically requires the same alertness and attention which is associated with the wise and proud car-owner.

The essentials that control the number of "miles per dollar" in the garden are simple in principle. The reward for observing these essentials is a multiple dividend.

The satisfaction derived from something accomplished is material life's main joy. Surely the Creator meant that the accomplishment of growing things should rank high.

This magazine is dedicated and devoted to the hardy garden. May it put many more "miles" in many more gardens.

We shall be glad to place the names of your garden-loving friends on our mailing list

L C Corbett
Bureau of Plant Industry
U S Dept of Agriculture
Washington D C

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Farr's Irises at the home of "Country Life in America,"
Garden City, N. Y.



4

BETTER PLANTS



\$25,000 from One Iris

An Iris multiplies itself from three to five times yearly.

In ten years, at the treble rate, one iris can easily be propagated into 59,049 plants.

One iris, Anna Farr, purchased in 1912 for \$1, divided and replanted yearly, would now have a retail value of \$147,-622.50.

The 1912 edition of Farr's Hardy Plant Specialties lists iris Anna Farr at \$1 each. The present price—when we can supply it—is \$2.50.

If you are fortunate enough to have developed 59,049 roots of iris Anna Farr, you have made at least \$25,000 from one iris in ten years.

It is very seldom that we can accept an order for iris Anna Farr. Ever since its introduction the demand has exceeded the rate of reproduction and our supply seldom has had a chance to multiply itself.

We are glad to offer from \$1 to 75 cents each for any amount of iris Anna Farr within our financial limits.

Conditions governing purchase of iris Anna Farr;

(a) Roots must be healthy, one year old, undivided or good strong divisions from older roots.

(b) Offers of less than 10 plants cannot be accepted.

(c) Payment after the plants have bloomed in our fields or otherwise been proved absolutely true to name.

(d) Price depends on the quantity and quality offered.

BETTER PLANTS—by Farr

An entirely new booklet giving a complete list of peonies, irises, phlox, hardy chrysanthemums, delphiniums, new and rare lilacs, deciduous and evergreen shrubs that should be known and grown in all good gardens.

Good for everybody—quite worthwhile for anybody

A copy of this book has been sent to my regular customers, but other interested garden lovers may have a copy by sending me their name and address.

Kill the Bugs that Bother

It is a comparatively simple matter to control the insects that damage hardy plants, shrubs, and roses, provided the correct spraying or dusting solutions are used. **Niagara Soluble Sulphur Compound** is used for destroying oyster shell and other scales on shrubs and fruit trees. It is in powder form and will readily dissolve in hot or cold water. May be applied at almost any season, although the application is easier and fully as effective when the plants are dormant—that is in February or March. 1-lb. pkg. 50 cts., 5-lb. pkg. \$2, 25-lb. pkg. \$7.50. Transportation charges to be paid by customer.

Masterpieces of the Garden

For less than the cost of an ordinary oil painting can be bought four everlasting and self-increasing "garden masterpieces."

Their self-increasing properties will always make them worth more than the original cost, while the beauty and satisfaction to be derived from them is incalculable.

MASTERPIECE COLLECTION

(Descriptions appear on page 3 of this issue)

IRIS	Each
Cecil Minturn.....	\$5 00
Sea Gull.....	3 00
Seminole.....	2 50
Japanesque.....	3 00

Complete set (amounting to \$13.50) for \$12.00.

Offer expires March 1, 1923, and applies only to orders mailed before that date. Supply is limited and orders will be booked in sequence received, subject to varieties being unsold. Order postcard enclosed for convenience.

Standard Spray Pump

Probably the best simple spray machine for use in rose-gardens, on tall shrubs and small trees. Made of brass with a nozzle on the discharge end and hose on the suction end. Handles effectively all kinds of liquids, insecticides, and fungicides; may be used for spraying disinfectants in buildings or on animals and poultry. No leather packing or metal subject to rust or decay is used. **Price \$6, postpaid.**

Special Combination Offer—1-lb. pkg. of Niagara Soluble Sulphur Compound and 1 Standard Spray Pump for \$6. Transportation charges to be paid by customer.

Bertrand H. Farr—Wyomissing Nurseries Company
1250 Garfield Avenue, Wyomissing, Penna.